



Town of Sullivan's Island

Tree Maintenance & Removal Guide

Tree Protection

Any tree with a diameter of 6" or greater is protected on Sullivan's Island and may only be removed by submitting a [Tree Removal Permit](#) by way of the Town's online permitting website. Any tree 16" in diameter, or greater, is considered a "significant" specimen and must be approved for removal by the [Tree Commission](#). Tree Protection Zones (TPZ) must be established around any protected tree located within the limits of disturbance ahead of commencing any permitted construction project; the TPZ shall be a minimum of 1-foot radius per inch of the tree trunk's DBH.



The "Goldbug Tree," made famous by Edgar Allen Poe's short story, is protected and currently located on a privately owned residential property.

Tree Commission Process

The Tree Commission meets the 4th Monday of each month at Town Hall. An application must be completed and demonstrate the following information:

- ◆ Tree species, size, vitality condition
- ◆ Location and proximity of surrounding structures, building setbacks and other trees (photos).
- ◆ Mitigation or replanting plan

Tree Removal & Replacement

There are two general categories of tree removal requests: healthy trees and "hazard" trees, certified as dead, dying or declining from diseases or other site conditions. In order to receive a tree removal permit, several documents will be required as part of the [online permit submittal](#).

- ◆ **Heathy trees:** Healthy trees require a mitigation plan (see requirements on next page). Trees 16" DBH, or greater, must be approved by the Tree Commission along with a tree replanting or mitigation plan.
- ◆ **Hazard trees (diseased, dying, mortally damaged or deemed hazard):** Removal of hazard trees must be accompanied by a written recommendation from a [Certified Arborist](#) (ISA, ASCA or equivalent). This assessment must clearly establish the tree as a hazard or eminent threat to life and safety. Trees meeting this criteria may be removed without mitigation or permitting fees. Staff may refer any removal permit request to the Sullivan's Island Tree Commission. Additionally, any tree found to be within 5 feet of the foundation of an existing principal building may be removed with a hazard tree removal permit.



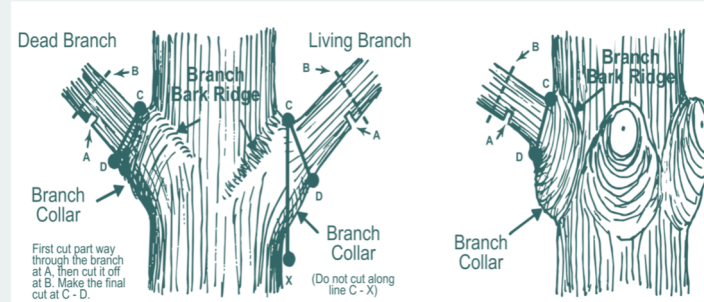
Measuring a Tree's DBH

Tree sizes are determined by measuring the number of inches in diameter at breast height (DBH). In order to measure the DBH, measure from the ground to a spot 4 1/2 feet up the tree. Then, from that point, wrap the tape measure around the tree to measure the circumference. Finally, take the circumference and divide by pi (3.14). Diameter tape measures are sold at most hardware stores.

Proper Pruning Principles

The Town follows ANSI-300 Standards for proper tree pruning and removal. Dead limbs may be removed at any time, but no more than 25% of the live crown can be removed in any given year. The topping of trees, including crepe myrtles, is not an acceptable practice. Over-pruning can cause damage to a tree causing destabilization and making it more vulnerable to disease and pest infestation. A Certified Arborist or tree care professional can help you with a proper short and long-term maintenance strategy. The Town requires notification before any limb of over 6 inches is removed to ensure the long-term viability of the tree.

Tree Commission Website [click here!](#)



Sullivan's Island is a Tree City USA...

In 2017, Sullivan's Island was designated a **Tree City USA** by the Arbor Day Foundation. To maintain eligibility for this designation, a community must meet the four **Tree City** standards:

- ◆ Maintain a Tree Commission with Certified Arborist on staff;
- ◆ Maintain a tree preservation ordinance;
- ◆ Maintain a community forestry program with an expenditure of at least \$2 per capita (per population);
- ◆ Hold an annual Arbor Day observance and Town Council proclamation.

Annually, the Town achieves the above standards and takes great pride in its continued commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the trees Island-wide!

Mitigation Plan Requirements

All tree mitigation or replacement plans must utilize a current survey and indicate the location of all **trees proposed** for removal in addition to the location of all **replacement trees**. The following information shall be outlined in a table:

- ◆ **Species:** The Town's [Tree Replacement List](#) should be used to select replacement trees. Removal of live oaks, magnolias, red cedars and pecans must be replaced with these preferred native species. Sabal palmettos may be used for replacement trees, however, may only account for 1/3 the total required mitigation inches, with each palmetto counted as no more than 4 inches of mitigation.
- ◆ **Size:** Replacement trees should be a minimum of 2" DBH and 10' high.
- ◆ **Quantity:** A one inch for one inch replacement ratio is required. Mitigation may be paid to the Tree Fund at a fair market rate set by the Tree Commission (\$230 per inch and \$76 per inch for pine species).

Tree Commission Staff

Charles Drayton, Planning Director
Email: cdrayton@sullivanisland.sc.gov

Rebecca Fanning, Town Naturalist
Email: rfanning@sullivanisland.sc.gov

Joe Henderson, ISA, Town Administrator
Email: rfanning@sullivanisland.sc.gov

Jessie Gress, Tree Commission Secretary
Email: jgress@sullivanisland.sc.gov

